DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD
MASTER PLAN
TARGET MARKET STRATEGIES

Prepared For:

Mansfield Downtown Partnership
Mansfield, Connecticut

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MARCH 2002

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I. OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The people of Mansfield have long expressed a desire to see a downtown center created at Storrs that could serve as a civic and business focal point for the Town. This vision often expressed itself during community discussions in the form of a traditional New England village center. Most recently, a market analysis, recommended strategies and implementation proposals were formally presented to the Town in February 2000 in a report entitled <u>Mansfield Downtown Action Agenda 2000</u>. That report is the point of departure for this effort.

The current Storrs business district is essentially a series of independently operating retail strip centers predominately serving the needs of students, faculty and visitors to the University of Connecticut. The University owns a substantial tract of property adjoining the business area as well as several of the retail and business buildings. The University has embarked upon a major enhancement (one billion dollars over ten years) to its physical plant as it positions itself as a public university of national stature. Plans call for producing an additional 500 to 1,000 beds of housing by the year 2003. The undeveloped University property adjoining the business district is a candidate for some or all of this housing. *The challenge before the Mansfield Downtown Partnership is how to realize the community objective of creating a vibrant, exciting, mixed-use downtown center through leveraging the housing investment planned by the University*.

A multi-disciplinary team consisting of Milone & MacBroom, team leader, with The Miniutti Group, Architectural Design and Landscape Architecture; Harrall-Michalowski Associates, Planning and Development; Johnson Land Design, Landscape Architecture; and Dr. Norman Garrick, Transportation Engineering was retained by the Town of Mansfield to work with the Downtown Partnership to structure a Master Plan for the Downtown Area. Harrall-Michalowski Associates role on the team is to prepare the target market strategies that will guide the physical planning for the area.

This document addresses the following objectives:

- Develop a market-based plan and niche strategy that builds upon the University housing investment and identifies market-driven opportunities to collaboratively upgrade and nourish the Downtown Mansfield business district.

- Use the distinct identity of a New England village to make Downtown Mansfield a unique niche destination within the regional marketplace.

- Identify new business and development opportunities to make Downtown Mansfield a 12-month destination and that help create a New England village character and sense of place.

- Engage Downtown Mansfield stakeholders in a participatory process that builds a shared vision for development of the area, encourages initiatives in collaborative marketing and investment in their properties and businesses.

- Offer recommendations to the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut that promote and facilitate Downtown Mansfield improvements.

II. TARGET MARKET REVIEW

A. Economic and Demographic Factors

The following are key factors to be recognized in the development of a target market strategy for Downtown Mansfield:

- Downtown Mansfield is located adjacent to the University of Connecticut's main campus at Storrs. The Downtown is located approximately 27 miles east of the state capitol in Hartford. The Town of Mansfield is located in Tolland County which includes thirteen towns in the northeast quadrant of Connecticut. As of the 2000 Census, Tolland County had a population of 136,364, the second smallest population of Connecticut's eight counties. The largest town in the County is Vernon followed by Mansfield with 28,063 and 20,720 respectively. The Mansfield population includes University of Connecticut students.

- Regional highway access to the University and Downtown is via Interstate 84 and State Route 195. Given Connecticut' small geographic size the University and Downtown can be reached from any point in the State in a 90 minute drive. The closest commercial airport is Bradley International Airport approximately a 30 minute drive.

- The largest employment sectors within the Northeast Workforce Investment Area which includes Mansfield are: government services (i.e. University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University), services, retail trade and manufacturing. As of the 2000 Census, governmental services constituted 26 percent of the workforce with services comprising 21 percent, the retail sector comprising 20 percent and manufacturing represents 19 percent of the workforce of 50,860. Unemployment within the Northeast Workforce Investment Area was 3.3 percent as of the end of 1999. Major employers within the region are: University of Connecticut, Windham Community Hospital, Brand Rex Company, Eastbrook Mall, Eastern Connecticut State University, Stop & Shop and SNET.

- The University of Connecticut is a public coed university founded in 1881 and its main campus is located on a 3,100 acre campus in a rural setting. The University provides both undergraduate and graduate degrees and had a total Fall 2000 enrollment of approximately 18,876 students at Storrs. Enrollment in 2000 was comprised of 71 percent undergraduate and 29 percent graduate students. Faculty and staff at the Storrs campus comprise approximately 4,000 additional individuals.

- Approximately 8,500 students live on the Storrs campus in sixty-six residence halls. Also, nearly 500 graduate students reside on campus and nearby apartments. There are approximately 4,000 undergraduate commuter students. Consequently, UCONN has one of the highest percentage of students living on campus in the country. The University also offers strong intercollegiate athletic programs (primarily Division I) in men's and women's sports which generates substantial visitation.

- The University of Connecticut has over 92,000 alumni who live in Connecticut.

- The Town of Mansfield is the second largest municipality in its region. The following attributes indicate the spending potential of the Town:

Spending Potential of Market Areas

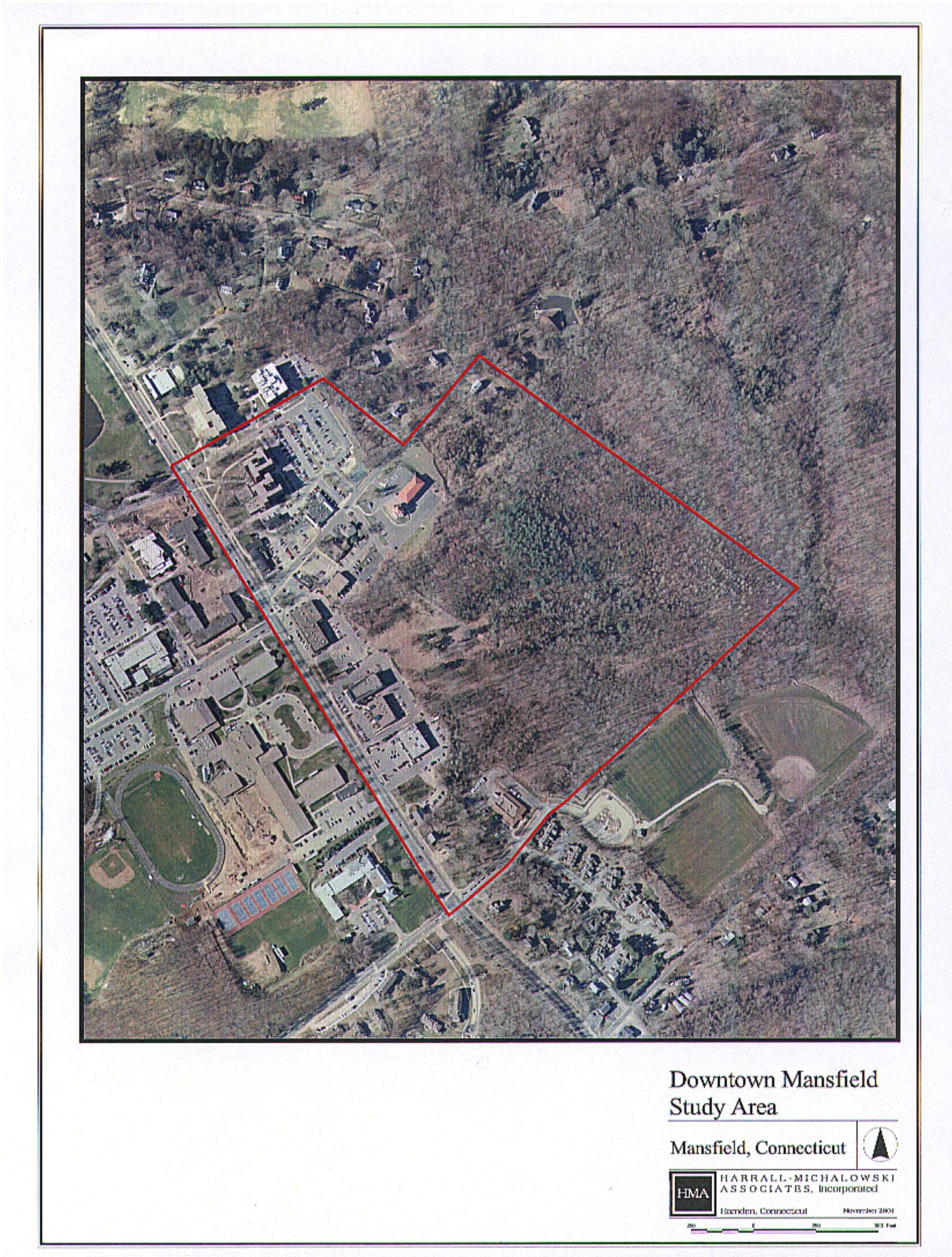
Attribute	Town- 2001 Estimate	5 Minute Drive Time Trade Area
Population	21,347	13,017
Households	6,004	2,714
Per Capita Income	$20,013	$13,156
Average Household Income	$72, 138	$53, 778
Median Household Income	$49,475	$37,554
Average Family Household Income	$92,751	$70,516
Median Family Household Income	$64,743	$46,370

Source: Claritas, Inc. compiled by HMA

B. Existing Business District

The Downtown Mansfield business district currently consists of approximately 18± acres. The University of Connecticut owns approximately 6 acres of this property while seven parcels totaling approximately 12.2 acres are in non-University control. The University owns 37± acres of undeveloped property contiguous to the Downtown. Refer to the aerial photograph which follows this page for a view of the study area.

Downtown Mansfield currently includes fifty businesses and institutions occupying almost 146,000 square feet of building space. Approximately 70,000 square feet of this space can be categorized as business and retail space with the balance of the building space in governmental or institutional occupancy. The building space is distributed over the following classifications:


Downtown Mansfield
Study Area
Mansfield, Connecticut
HMA
HARRALL-MICHALOWSKI
ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
Hamden, Connecticut
November 2001

Business Summary by Classification
Storrs Center

SIC Classification	Category	No. of Establishments	Square Footage
54	**Food Stores**		
5411	Convenience Store	1	3,400
55	**Automotive**	1	1,400
56	**Apparel & Accessories**	2	2,800
57	**Home Furnishings**		
5735	Records, Tapes & CDs	2	3,125
58	**Eating & Drinking Places**		
5812	Eating Places	10	22,120
5813	Bars	1	8,230
59	**Misc Retail**		
5912	Pharmacies	1	3,500
5932	Books	1	900
5947	Gifts/Novelty	1	1,050
5992	Florist	1	1,050
5999	Misc. Retail	5	5,744
60	**Financial Institutions**	2	3,700
72	**Personal Services**	5	3,514
80	**Health Services**	2	4,900
	Office	4	4,900
43	**Post Office**	1	8,000
82	**Educational Services**	4	16,436
86	**Church**	1	11,686
89	**Service**	4	6,500
91	**General Government**	1	23,000
	Vacant	6	9,679
	TOTAL		**145,634**

Source: Town of Mansfield

The Hyett Palma report indicated that the Downtown contained 35 retail businesses occupying 64,231 square feet of space. No retail vacancies were reported at that time. Business office space was occupied by 23 businesses in 65,775 square feet of space. One vacant office space consisting of 3,500 square feet was reported. In the 20 months since the Hyett Palma report was issued there has been a decline of 6 businesses and an increase of vacancies to six units totaling 9,679 square feet. While these vacancies represent only 9% of the commercial building inventory, they are notable in that this commercial space has a history of almost total occupancy.

C. Rental Housing Market

The rental housing market at Storrs is unique in that it is primarily driven by the needs of the University. The recent history of unit occupancy has been one of almost total occupancy. A five percent vacancy rate is often cited as a minimum to insure some availability and choice in housing.

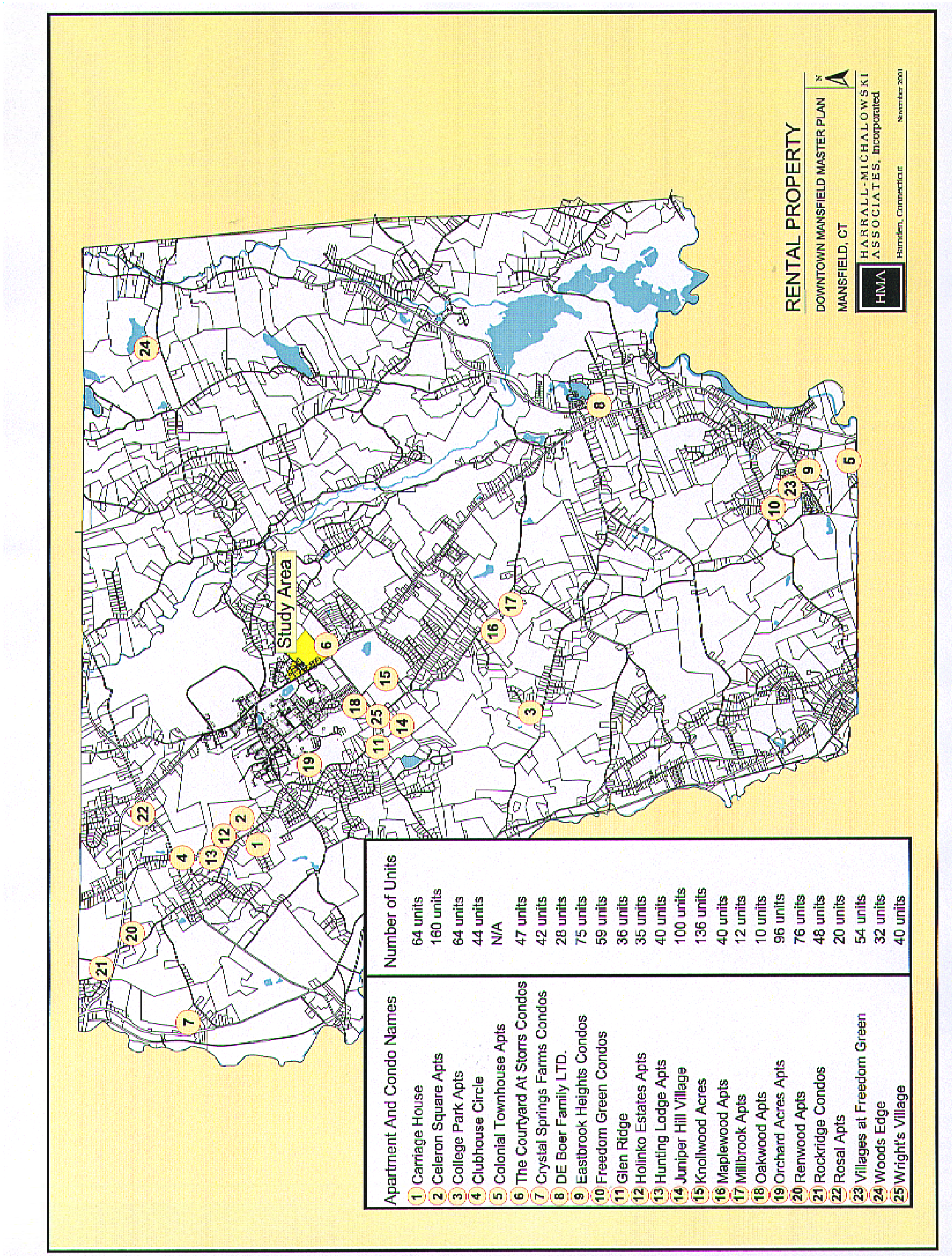
The private multi-family housing stock in Mansfield consists of twenty-five apartment and condominium complexes. These housing complexes contain 1358 units and are primarily clustered around the UCONN campus. Refer to the Rental Property Map for an illustration of the locations of these housing complexes. From a sampling of these apartments, negligible vacancy exists.

Recognizing this situation, the University has embarked upon developing new housing for its students as well as upgrading older dormitory units. The most recent product of this program is the Hilltop Apartment complex. This $42 million complex consists of 13 apartment buildings and accommodates 968 students in 330 apartment units. Each unit has private rooms with double beds, a dishwasher, washer and dryer, refrigerator with ice maker and air conditioning. The units were produced by a private developer responding to a Request for Proposal offering a long-term land lease from the University. These units rent for $585 per month per bedroom and require a one-year lease. This rent is more than double the cost of a dormitory room on campus. The housing was offered for rent in August 2001 and was completely rented in sixteen hours.

A component of the University's Master Plan calls for the production of an additional 500 to 1000 beds of student housing to improve the competitive position of the University among its peer public universities. Some of this new housing has been allocated to the north campus for undergraduate housing. The remaining 500 beds are not yet assigned to a location. One candidate location is the Downtown and adjoining undeveloped area which is the subject of this planning effort. This housing is targeted toward graduate level students.

1. Primary Market

The primary housing market at Storrs is almost totally driven by University housing demand. As the dominant economic generator in this region, the UCONN 2000, ten year, $1 billion program to upgrade the infrastructure of the University creates housing demand at new levels and forms. Traditional dormitory housing is no longer considered desirable


Study Area
RENTAL PROPERTY
DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD MASTER PLAN
MANSFIELD, CT
HMA
HARRALL-MICHALOWSKI ASSOCIATES, Incorporated
Hamden, Connecticut
November 2001
Apartment And Condo Names
Number of Units
1 Carriage House 64 units
2 Celeron Square Apts 160 units
3 College Park Apts 64 units
4 Clubhouse Circle 44 units
5 Colonial Townhouse Apts N/A
6 The Courtyard At Storrs Condos 47 units
7 Crystal Springs Farms Condos 42 units
8 DE Boer Family LTD. 28 units
9 Eastbrook Heights Condos 75 units
10 Freedom Green Condos 59 units
11 Glen Ridge 36 units
12 Holinko Estates Apts 35 units
13 Hunting Lodge Apts 40 units
14 Juniper Hill Village 100 units
15 Knollwood Acres 136 units
16 Maplewood Apts 40 units
17 Millbrook Apts 12 units
18 Oakwood Apts 10 units
19 Orchard Acres Apts 96 units
20 Renwood Apts 76 units
21 Rockridge Condos 48 units
22 Rosal Apts 20 units
23 Villages at Freedom Green 54 units
24 Woods Edge 32 units
25 Wright's Village 40 units

by students. Fully equipped apartments are now the standard that must be offered by major educational institutions in order to compete for students. The acceptance of this new housing product at rates far in excess of previous rent levels indicates market acceptance of this new housing. The University's ability to channel this new housing to its student body assures occupancy and thereby the financial viability of this housing. This ability to focus demand and assure occupancy presents an opportunity to generate other complementary land uses as part of an expanded development project. Assured occupancy of the housing component of a mixed use development is essential to the feasibility of such a venture. It provides immediate cash flow for a project while other use segments are marketed and leased.

In addition to student housing, housing for new faculty and visiting faculty would be appropriate for a Downtown location. The extent of need for this housing resource has not been quantified at this time. Research should be conducted to determine if it is appropriate for the University to promote housing for this group. If it is concluded that faculty housing should be generated, units for childless households should be located in the core of the new Downtown above ground floor uses.

2. Secondary Market

Across the nation, housing developments have been built in university communities for retirees. This university lifestyle housing mostly takes the form of common-interest ownership projects and are associated with some form of lifetime learning program at the nearby university. University communities offer an attractive lifestyle combining education, culture, entertainment and a stimulating environment usually in an attractive physical setting. This undeveloped market could be generated in Storrs given the University's extensive academic programs and the large in-state alumni population (92,000). An expanded educational program targeting retirees would have to be put in place and the housing offered as an alternative to other retirement options available in Connecticut and elsewhere. The University currently has a Center for Learning in Retirement in operation. The Center could form the nucleus of an enhanced program that has a permanent housing component.

Retirement housing in general, is growing in popularity as the "baby boomer" generation reaches retirement age. These individuals are increasingly not wanting to leave their home state and are looking to purchase a retirement lifestyle, and not just a shelter. This creates a potentially large market for a retirement community product that offers a range of activities, both active and passive, and provides smaller, yet well designed and well appointed homes. Linking this general housing trend to a university lifestyle creates a niche market as well as a market opportunity.

Another housing form that would draw from the Mansfield area as well as the secondary market would be assisted living units. Because the service component of this type of housing is so important to market acceptance, linkages to University specialists in medicine, gerontology, recreation, etc. would distinguish this housing from others available in Connecticut thereby enhancing its marketability.

Assisted living facilities are residential group facilities that are not licensed as nursing homes, but provide personal care to those who need assistance with daily activities. Services offered often include all meals, assistance with daily living activities, emergency call systems, transportation to off-site services, health programs and medication management and special social and recreational programs. The developments can be freestanding buildings or incorporated as sections of larger buildings or complexes. Typically, assisted living facilities house less than 100 residents who occupy private or semi-private rooms and have access to central dining facilities and activity rooms. This housing type may be appropriate for the fringes of the Downtown area but should not be considered in the core area.

D. Retail Market

A retail trade area is the geographic area adjacent to a retail establishment or adjoining retail establishments which contains the majority of its actual and potential customers and where its existing direct competition is located as well as where its future competition is likely to be located.

The primary trade area supporting Downtown Mansfield is comprised mainly of the UCONN campus and areas of the Town within a five minute drive of the location. Refer to the Trade Area Map which follows this page. The primary trade area (5 minute drive time) has an estimated 2001 population of 13,107 and 2,714 households. Households are projected to grow by 9.2 percent by 2006. Average household income is $53,778 and is projected to rise to $58,763 by 2006; a 9.3 percent increase.

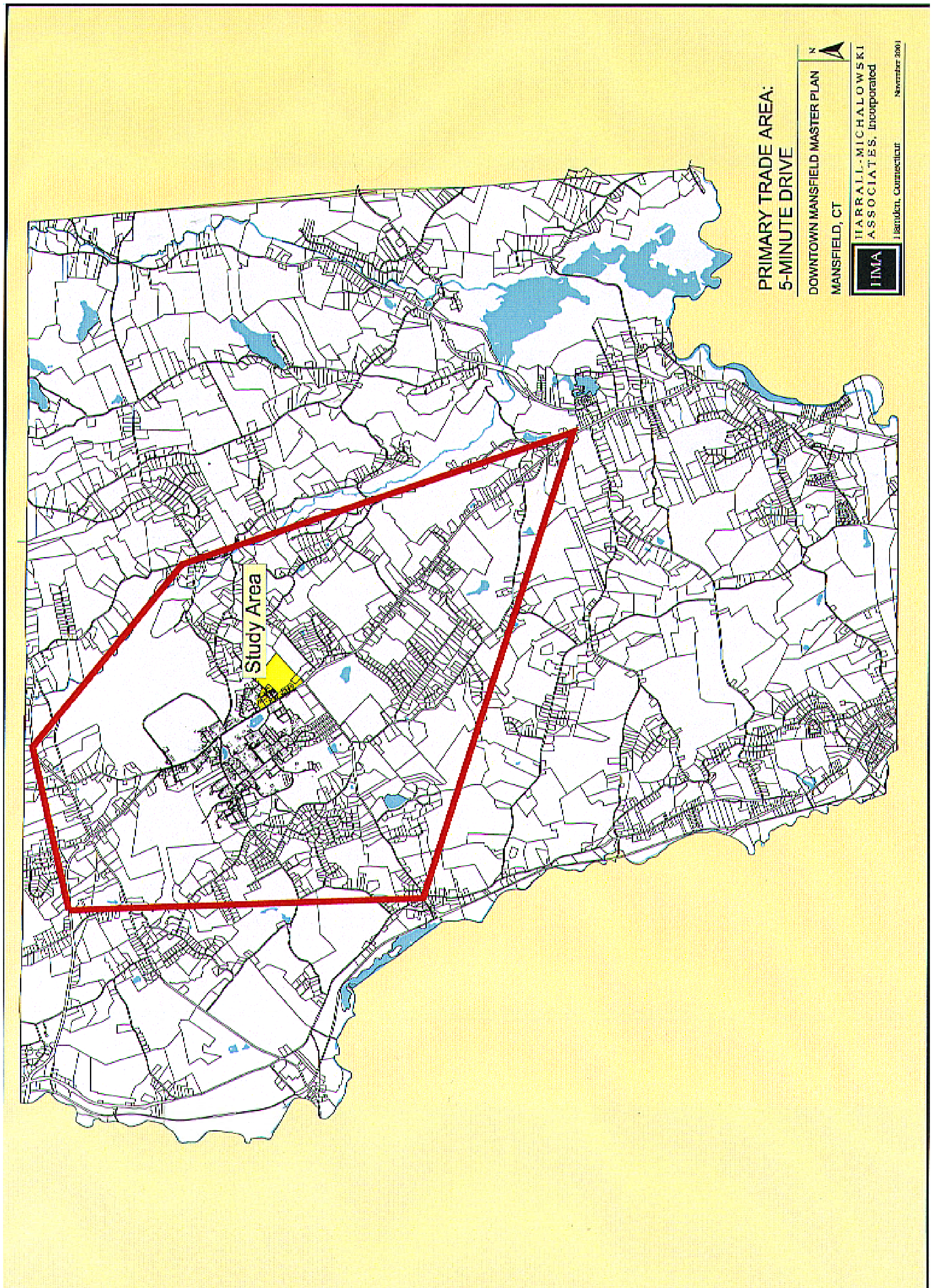
The Town of Mansfield which forms the secondary trade area has a 2001 estimated population of 21,347 and 6,004 households. Households are projected to grow by 6.2 percent by 2006. Average household income is $72,138 and is projected to rise to $83,380 or 15.6 percent by 2006. A full description of the demographics for the trade area is contained in Appendix A.

The current character of the goods and services offered Downtown and the small scale of the current retail space (70,000+ square feet) classify the area as a neighborhood center. A greater number and diversity of retail stores will have to be attracted if the area is to serve as a community center, which is the desired level of shopping being described at community meetings.

Students

A large percentage of the population within the primary trade area is comprised of students. The current generation of university students brings more disposable income and sophisticated spending patterns than any that preceded it.

A study by the Student Monitor finds that the average American student spends the following on discretionary items each month:



PRIMARY TRADE AREA:
5-MINUTE DRIVE
DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD MASTER PLAN
MANSFIELD, CT
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Hamden, Connecticut
November 2001
Study Area

Average Monthly Spending by Students

Item	Average Spent Per month
Apparel	$68
Food/Eat Out	$56
Entertainment	$55
Food/Prepare	$42
Music	$26
Books/Leisure	$23
Toiletries/Personal Care	$22
School Supplies	$18
Software	$10
Cleaning Supplies	$9

Source: American Demographics/Student Monitor 1999

A similar spending habit survey conducted at Ohio State University found the following monthly spending behavior:

Monthly Spending Behavior By Ohio State University Students

Responses (n=419)	Percent *	Maximum	Mean	Median
Going out to eat	97.1	$1000	$71.10	$50.00
Going to or renting movies	82.5	$150	$13.80	$10.00
Clothes	79.8	$800	$54.34	$30.00
Alcoholic beverages (including carry out & going to bars)	69.7	$900	$44.64	$20.00
CD's & other music purchases	67.8	$200	$18.83	$15.00
Pleasure reading (books or magazines not for school)	64.1	$100	$9.22	$5.00
Travel (other than daily travel to work & to school)	52.5	$900	26.21	$10.00
Going to athletic events	50.1	$200	11.11	$1.00
Going to concerts	38.5	$200	$9.69	$0.00
On medical needs or health care	36.8	$400	$15.24	$0.00
Sports equipment or fees for playing sports	29.8	$200	$9.29	$0.00
Other ~	19.3	$1000	$123.28	$50.00

*Percent of students who spend money on these items on a monthly basis
~Many of these students cited living expenses such as rent and groceries rather than uses of discretionary funds.
Source: Ohio State University, Student Affairs Assessment, April 2000

National surveys have also found increasing sophistication levels among the products consumed by college students. According to the publisher of The Source, a college-oriented cultural magazine, college students will remark "I want the best shirt. Not just a shirt, but the best shirt." Greenfield Online, Inc. a marketing research firm reports from their on-campus market study that 57 percent of students are willing to pay a premium to get quality, 56 percent say they prefer to buy brand names. Understanding in depth, this student segment of Downtown's primary market is essential to increasing the capture rate of this key market segment. UCONN students reflect the growing affluence and sophistication of this market segment. Most of the students originate from Connecticut which is the wealthiest state in the nation which, in turn, impacts their spending potential.

In retailing, it is axiomatic that the two principal motivational factors influencing shopper locational decisions are (1) convenience and (2) selection and availability of desired goods. Clearly, the relationship of Downtown to the five minute drive time area and the lack of sites for significant competitive projects to be developed in this area, gives Downtown the convenience advantage. However, Downtown's current underdeveloped retail condition and insufficient merchandise selections must be addressed in future retail mix plans if greater market penetration is to be achieved.

A review of consumer spending patterns for the year 2001 over the 5 minute drive time radius from Downtown and Town of Mansfield shows the amount spent on the type of goods that are generally sold in the study area. Additionally, those expenditures for goods are compared to the expenditure for the same goods nationwide through the use of a market index. Under this index, any number over 1 shows that expenditures by households in the market area exceed the national average by that amount. Select expenditure patterns by consumers are provided in the following table.

Mansfield Consumer Expenditure Patterns - 2001

Expenditure Category	5 Minute Drive		Town of Mansfield	
	Annual Average Household	Market Index	Annual Average Household	Market Index
Food at Home	$5,090	1.12	$5,019	1.10
Food Away from Home	$6,096	1.48	$5,465	1.33
Alcoholic Beverages at Home	$1,685	2.33	$1,287	1.78
Alcoholic Beverages Away From Home	$1,620	2.28	$1,256	1.77
Personal Care Products	$1,037	1.28	$982	1.21
Household Textiles	$678	1.22	$711	1.28
Furniture	$605	.89	$769	1.13
Women's Apparel	$2,154	1.71	$1,886	1.50
Men's Apparel	$1,337	1.81	$1,131	1.53
Girls' Apparel	$213	.76	$282	1.01
Boys' Apparel	$171	.79	$216	1.00
Infants' Apparel	$118	.92	$138	1.07
Footwear	$693	1.58	$603	1.37
Other Apparel Products	$1,332	1.33	$1,303	1.30
TV, Radio & Sound Equipment	$2,071	1.32	$2,032	1.29
Reading Materials	$776	1.43	$762	1.41
Medical Services	$1,074	.90	$1,308	1.10
Medical Supplies	$176	1.09	$184	1.14

Source: Claritas, Inc.

There is a noticeable pattern that for nearly all of the goods and services that can be found in Downtown Mansfield, there is a higher spending on those items than the national average. Of particular note is the above average expenditures both within Downtown and in the Town for food away from home. Indicators such as this are favorable for the continued development of restaurants throughout the Downtown area. These goods also represent a significant portion of the annual income for the households in various areas. For example, the average household income within a 5-minute drive time of Downtown Mansfield for 2001 was $70,516, with $6,096 expended on food away from home annually.

The following table reviews the history of retail sales in Mansfield as reported by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.

Town of Mansfield
Retail Sale, Type of Business
Calendar Years 1998-2000

TYPE OF BUSINESS	1998 No. of Taxpayers	1998 Retail Sales	1999 No. of Taxpayers	1999 Retail Sales	2000 No. of Taxpayers	2000 Retail Sales
Retail Stores						
Hardware (SIC 52)	5	1,347,663	4	1,493,259	4	1,533,743
General Merchandise (SIC 53)	4	1,520,586	4	1,428,132	4	1,442,806
Food Products (SIC 54)	9	5,914,293	9	6,352,608	8	3,234,954
Automotive Products (SIC 55)	11	4,508,064	11	5,208,125	9	1,955,714
Apparel & Accessory Stores (SIC 56)	4	950,098	U	187,046	U	344,354
Home Furnish. & Appliances (SIC 57)	12	2,773,022	10	2,737,939	6	2,815,064
Eating & Drinking Places (SIC 58)	35	12,297,501	34	12,782,317	44	12,819,638
Misc. Shopping Goods Stores (SIC 59)	104	12,289,565	99	15,404,574	91	12,655,618
Retail Stores Totals	184	$41,600,792	U	$45,594,000	U	$36,801,891
All Other Outlets	294	$34,391,936	289	$36,996,399	361	$38,362,690
Total All Outlets	478	$75,992,728	U	$82,590,399	U	$75,164,581

Source: Research Unit, Connecticut Department of Revenue Services

It can be readily seen from the above table, the dominant position that food away from home (eating & drinking places) and miscellaneous shopping goods play in Mansfield's total retail sales. These two categories account for 69% of the total retail store sales in 2000 and reflect the spending patterns of the University community. These retail types are well represented in the Downtown. However, significant expenditures in these categories occur out of town based upon annual average household consumer expenditures. This creates the potential for increasing the capture rate in these expenditure categories and supporting additional outlets in the Downtown.

Daytime Population

Another method to assess the market potential of Downtown Mansfield is to estimate the daytime population of the area adjoining Downtown and the resultant consumer expenditure potential. These groups form a major component of a captive trade area and as proximity increases the likelihood of purchasing goods or services also increases. To this group is added visitors to Storrs and their expenditure potential. The following table provides an estimate of the average daytime population and its aggregate disposable income at Storrs.

Daytime Population and Disposable Income at Storrs

Segment	Total	Aggregate Disposable Income
University full time employees	4,047	$91,908,000
University students	18,876	$55,269,000
Town Hall employees	75	$1,732,000
E.O. Smith employees	155	$3,290,000
E.O. Smith students	1,200	$461,000
Downtown employees	230	$1,904,000
Est. average daily visitors to UCONN	530	$5,724,000
	GRAND TOTAL	**$160,288,000**

See Appendix B for visitation estimates

Assuming a capture rate of 20% of the aggregate disposable income available at Storrs, a total annual sales potential of $32,000,000 exists. The following table presents the supportable square footage of retail space assuming three sales volume levels and three levels of sales productivity.

Sales Productivity Matrix

Sales Volumes	$150 per sq. ft.	$200 per sq. ft.	$250 per sq. ft.
$27,200,000	181,000	136,000	109,000
$32,000,000	213,000	160,000	128,000
$36,800,000	245,000	184,000	147,000

Using a conservative sales level of fifteen percent below projected sales and an aggressive level of fifteen percent above projected sales, projected demand will support 160,000 square feet of retail space at a $200 per square foot sales productivity. The range of sales productivity used corresponds to reasonable sales levels in a variety of retail settings as compiled by the Urban Land Institute.

E. Office Market

Currently more than half of the existing space in Downtown is used for office and related purposes. The largest use of space is the Town Hall with 23,000 square feet, followed by educational service at 16,436 square feet and church use at 11,686 square feet. Private office uses include health services, financial and general office uses.

Three sources of demand for office space appear to exist at this time. First, as was suggested in the Hyett Palma Report, uses that serve the personal needs of residents in the trade area. Second, Mansfield has over four hundred businesses, a majority of which function as home enterprises. The growth of these businesses will generate new demand for office space as is demonstrated in other university communities. Also, the Town can review its land use policies to refine the point at which business activity becomes incompatible in a residential district. Third, the University is a major consumer of goods and services on its campus. It could encourage major vendors to open offices nearby to enhance their service to the University.

Personal service and professional offices tend to require small quantities of space, typically in the 500 to 3500 square foot range. These space requirements can be accommodated on upper floors of proposed buildings in the Downtown.

The ability to maintain an office staff has become an increasingly difficult task for small businesses. The accessibility and convenience of Downtown enhance the district as an employment location. Availability of public transportation, proximity to a large pool of part-time student workers and faculty expertise, shopping, banking, personal services, etc. are benefits an employer offers a Downtown worker which are not available at stand alone office parks. Further, these features are available at no cost to the small business.

Professional and small service business office space should be a component of the use mix in Downtown. Offices should be encouraged in Downtown as an essential ingredient in the revitalization of the area.

From a use perspective, office space can function as a stand alone use on the fringe of Downtown. However, in the core area of Downtown, office space should be assigned to upper floors leaving the ground floor for retail uses and service uses which generate considerable pedestrian activity. Zoning regulations need to encourage this layering of uses.

Downtown's office niche is serving the small professional and service company user requiring 500 to 3500 square feet of space. The scale of this market is compatible with the scale of the proposed Downtown building stock.

Parking arrangements for clients and tenants should be made in common parking facilities. It was observed that many small businesses are located in residences scattered in the Town. The Planning Department should review the zoning that permits this practice. Home businesses may be of a scale that could seriously inhibit the development of Downtown office space because it represents a low cost alternative to multi-story office space.

III. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

A. Background

In 1999, surveys were conducted of area shoppers to gauge the "health" of Downtown Storrs, understand what area shoppers like about Downtown and to learn their preferences for "improvements." In general, those surveyed liked the feeling of safety while shopping in Downtown, the helpfulness and knowledge of salespeople, the cleanliness of the area and the quality of business services and retail goods. Suggested improvements included an increase in the variety of retail goods, more and improved restaurants and expanded business hours. Shoppers also stressed the desire for Downtown to become more pedestrian friendly and to address the need for improvements to traffic, parking and bus routes.

The following is a list of the top ten important uses as perceived by community residents and students surveyed about Downtown:

Student Important Uses	Residents Important Uses
Movie theatre	Movie theatre
Clothing stores	Bookstore
Other restaurants	Other restaurants
Gas station	Community recreation
Bookstore	Youth center
Apartments	Public green
Community recreation	Inn or hotel
Youth center	Clothing Stores
Gourmet take-out food	Youth education
Youth education	Gas station

In an effort to build upon this base of information, business stakeholders within the Storrs Downtown were queried to develop a more in-depth understanding of current store operations, anticipated business related changes and reactions to proposals to re-create Downtown into a more traditional New England town center.

B. Private Property Owners

Private property owners within the Downtown area were asked for their vision for a revitalized Downtown, their priorities for improvements to the commercial viability of Downtown, their perceived niche in the new downtown and their thoughts about establishing a new downtown business association. Downtown property owners were also asked about the possibility of creating a new, mixed-use business zone which would include housing and their willingness to make new investments in the new Downtown in the form of building improvements and/or donations or trades of land as appropriate to the implementation of a revitalization plan.

While individual responses varied, it was universally clear from the interviews that those downtown property owners interviewed recognize the need for change and want to be a part of the efforts to create a pedestrian friendly, mixed-use town center that serves the needs of UCONN students and the Town of Mansfield residents.

Physical Reorganization Property owners interviewed were open to exploring ways in which the physical layout of the downtown area could be reorganized into a more traditional New England town center. The new downtown should contain mixed-use buildings, have an attractive walking environment to encourage pedestrian activity and multi-purpose shopping trips and be served by on-street parking, parking lots available to all patrons and improved public transportation.

Each owner expressed his or her ideas for downtown improvements. Suggestions included narrow, tree lined streets with on-street parking and wide sidewalks. Buildings should be multi-story and mixed-use, with the ability to house a varied tenant mix, in a variety of space sizes. Each owner in Downtown wants assurance that physical changes to Downtown will not put their properties at a competitive disadvantage. Their principal considerations revolved around access, visibility and parking.

Housing in Downtown Property owners interviewed supported the concept of developing housing within the reorganized downtown, both in the form of mixed use buildings and stand-alone multifamily buildings. The idea of creating a downtown residential presence was viewed as good for business and good for the community.

Parking Most downtown property owners interviewed expressed a need for additional parking which is well located relative to the needs of existing merchants. Downtown property owners are open to the idea of shared parking as one means of addressing spot parking shortages, as long as their tenants would benefit. Owners recognize the benefits derived from serving multiple shopping needs with one parking space, within the context of an attractive, pedestrian friendly environment.

Financial Participation Each of the Downtown private property owners interviewed has made or is in the process of making significant physical improvements to their properties. Each expressed a willingness to make additional investments if they believe the improvements would result in improved business opportunities.

One owner expressed a willingness to discuss making a portion of their property available for public access to an expanded downtown located behind existing commercial properties fronting on Route 195. Such public access might be accomplished by means of a purchased easement, a land swap or an outright purchase.

University Considerations Each property owner indicated that the extent of their financial participation in plans to improve Downtown Storrs would be determined, in part, by the University's willingness to work with Downtown property owners and merchants. The creation of on-campus businesses competing with Downtown merchants is viewed as a major impediment to plans to create a revitalized town center.

Downtown Business Association Property owners interviewed were not very enthusiastic about the creation of a downtown business association. All remained open to a further discussion of the benefits which could be derived from such an organization and how such an organization might be operated and funded.

Downtown Zone When discussing the types of municipal actions which would be helpful to downtown revitalization efforts, property owners expressed support for the creation of a Downtown Zone which would facilitate the development of a multi-use town center for Mansfield.

C. Downtown Merchants

Merchants within the Downtown area were interviewed to develop a more in-depth understanding of current store operations, anticipated business related changes and reactions to proposals to re-create Downtown into a more traditional New England town center. Refer to Appendix C for business survey form utilized. Several merchants have been located in Downtown Storrs for more that ten years and provided a good historical perspective to understanding the business characteristics of downtown. One merchant interviewed has been doing business in Downtown for 26 years.

Location Most merchants interviewed chose to locate their business in Downtown due to the market opportunities associated with the presence of UCONN. Downtown Storrs, with its proximity to the campus and its visibility from Route 195 traffic, is viewed by merchants as an excellent retailing and service location.

Business Activity Merchants see UCONN as both a positive and a negative force for business activity. When school is in session business is good. When school is not in session, most merchants experience a significant fall-off in business activity. This is especially acute over the winter and summer breaks. Some merchants attempt to level these dramatic swings in business volume thru special advertising and building a base of patrons who live in Mansfield year round.

Advertising The primary source of advertising for area merchants is the University's Daily Campus newspaper. None of the merchants interviewed were engaged in joint advertising promotions with other downtown merchants. Most advertising during the school year is geared to UCONN's students, faculty and staff.

Parking, Access and Visibility Access to downtown businesses from Route 195 is generally viewed as good. Merchants are concerned that good access be maintained during and after downtown rebuilding efforts. Merchants' reactions to existing parking availability varied. Some were satisfied with the amount and utility of existing parking, while others complained of a lack of convenient parking for patrons. Several merchants indicated that a substantial portion of their business was pedestrian in nature, which diminished the amount of parking required. The need for visibility to passing traffic on Route 195 also varied. Some merchants believe continued high visibility from Route 195 to be critical to their business, while others indicated that visibility was useful but not essential.

Responses to Downtown Revitalization   Merchants interviewed are interested but skeptical about current efforts to bring about a revitalization of Downtown Storrs. One longtime merchant referred to news clippings of earlier failed attempts at similar efforts. There appears to be an underlying belief that Mansfield's land use regulatory entities have not been supportive of past efforts to create a revitalized Storrs downtown. Merchants also question UCONN's commitment to a revitalized downtown, noting the University's recent trend to develop and expand on-campus retailing activities, which may compete with downtown merchants.

Merchants were generally supportive of efforts to create a more traditional New England town center containing mixed-use buildings within an attractive pedestrian environment. They are open to exploring changes that will bring more shoppers into downtown. Merchants desire to be involved in this planning process to assure that their ideas are heard and that their business interests are protected. They were particularly concerned that disruption to their business operations during the construction phase be minimized and that they have a voice in construction sequencing and how access to their stores will be maintained.

IV. MARKET STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. Downtown Mansfield Market Factors

Based upon the preceding market review, the Hyett Palma report, stakeholder perspectives, responses from earlier community surveys and knowledge of comparable business districts, the following observations will influence the Downtown Mansfield business district's marketing strategy and overall development for the next several years:

1. **Downtown Mansfield has insufficient commercial leaseable area to serve as a community center.** To function as a community shopping center, the quantity of leaseable retail space should be doubled to approximately 140,000 square feet. This will require a greater market capture rate than at present as well as a broadening of the market area.

2. **The academic calendar produces a severe disruption to business activity.** School vacations cause breaks in business activity that need to be bridged by introduction of housing and offices in the Downtown and greater reliance upon the patronage of permanent Mansfield residents and visitors to the area.

3. **Downtown Mansfield is currently a one-dimensional commercial area in a multi-faceted market.** The economic review reveals several vital primary markets for the Downtown, including University students, employees, visitors and Mansfield residents within a 5-minute drive time. Each of these markets carries substantial disposable income and each is predisposed to patronize the Downtown; however, Downtown's current retail mix is not synchronized to its markets. Downtown is perceived as catering to a narrow segment of the student population, offering fast food and low cost impulse retail.

4. **Downtown is vulnerable to individual business and policy decisions.** One of the Downtown's greatest strengths – its compact size also creates vulnerabilities. The character mix and vitality of Downtown is extremely fragile. Undesirable businesses or policies can harm this fragile commercial environment. Currently, Downtown does not adequately serve nor invite the multiple captive market opportunities that are available to it.

5. **Downtown's multiple markets share a vision for new uses and services.** The Downtown's major markets – University students, workers, visitors and Mansfield residents – share a similar vision for Downtown. This vision, which can be characterized as a *"community gathering place"*, can accommodate a variety of retail uses that attract each market segment, including quality restaurants, up-scale food market, art galleries, craft outlets, Farmer's Market or even a seasonal ice rink.

6. **Town regulatory policies impede the development of a mixed use, high density, business district.** Currently there is no provision in the Town's Zoning Regulations for a high density, mixed use district. Issues such as shared parking, on-street parking, off-site parking, architectural standards, high lot coverage ratios, etc. need to be addressed in creating a downtown business district. A new regulatory framework must be put in place to facilitate private property owner participation in creating a Downtown District.

7. **Downtown must connect to its primary markets.** The Downtown must strengthen and broaden its links to its primary markets – University students, employees, visitors and Mansfield residents. These captive markets are all located within a 10 to 15 minute walking distance or 5 minute driving distance of the business district. If these primary markets are engaged, then this success will attract secondary markets from beyond.

8. **Success will require a unified commitment from a public/private partnership.** Achieving the potential of Downtown Mansfield will require both financial and political commitment from Downtown's primary stakeholders, including property owners, businesses, residents, the University of Connecticut and the Town of Mansfield.

9. **The University has a special burden in achieving a successful Downtown.** As the dominant landowner in Downtown, the University must take a broad view of the benefits to be derived from a vibrant Downtown district. In order to achieve such a district, the University must be willing to assume real estate risks, engage numerous private enterprises, reserve sites for future growth, locate selected University functions such as performance and display spaces within the Downtown plan, and use its economic resources to ensure critical business and housing types locate within the Downtown.

B. Market Strategy

To establish Downtown Mansfield as a destination district, a substantially greater quantity and diversity of uses are required. A mixed-use area developed with a traditional street grid, two and three story buildings with layered uses of retail at grade, office and/or housing on the second or third floors and civic gathering spaces such as a Town Green or Square must be developed.

Key elements required for the new Downtown are:

- Mixed use layered by building floor
- Grid street system – 200-300 foot blocks
- Buildings on street line – both sides of street
- Traditional New England architectural expression

- Shared parking, on-street parking
- Civic spaces – pedestrian oriented
- Housing at 10-15 units per acre, 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors
- Comprehensive streetscape design
- Well defined edges

Downtown will have two land use sectors: the core and the fringe. The core will be comprised of that area from Storrs Road eastward encompassing all the currently disturbed back-land into the beginning of the slope. The fringe area will consist of the currently undeveloped hillside east of the core area.

Core uses should include:

- Ground floor retail, restaurants and destination uses such as galleries, arts, crafts and gifts (emphasize independent merchants)
- 2nd, 3rd, 4th floor faculty/market rate/artist housing (50-100 units)
- 2nd floor offices and services
- Artist lofts with studios on 2nd and 3rd floors (25-40 units)
- Small inn with restaurant or bed & breakfast (12-25 rooms)
- Performance spaces/civic spaces
- Town Green or Square
- "Quiet Corner" visitor center and gift shop
- Dairy bar
- Transportation hub
- Parcels reserved for future growth

Fringe uses should include:

- Townhouse style graduate student /faculty housing
- University lifestyle housing (active adult)
- Parking
- Water features/seasonal ice rink
- Pedestrian/bike paths
- Passive recreation

The street and pedestrian system to be developed must connect existing uses which form key activity nodes Downtown. Strong pathways should connect:

- Existing businesses
- Post Office
- Courtyard Condos
- Greek facility
- Public transportation
- Campus pedestrian & bicycle routes
- Town Hall
- Community Center
- E.O. Smith
- School of Fine Arts
- Bishop Conference Center
- Nathan Hale Inn & Conference Center

Intensifying and siting new development along logical pathways between existing building nodes should form the skeleton of the local circulation system.

The following general market strategy should be pursued:

- Use housing to increase the captive market and promote pedestrian activity;
- Broaden the captive market with introduction of non-student housing & offices (bridge academic calendar);
- Capture expenditure potential currently unrealized: visitors to campus;
- Retail should feature local arts, crafts and goods, destination uses and independent merchants;
- Restaurants and entertainment should be a major presence;
- Dominate markets that are located within a 10 to 15 minute walking distance and 5 minute drive time of Downtown and are predisposed to patronizing it;
- Capitalize on the substantial amount of disposable income offered by Mansfield residents and an increasingly affluent and more sophisticated student population;
- Develop community activities, special events and other activities that appeal to the common interests of both residents and students;
- Attract new consumers, business and investment that flow from university generated activity;
- Take advantage of cost-effective marketing channels that can deliver information about Downtown business and activities directly to selected markets.
- Once Downtown has dominated its primary trade area it can then more effectively compete for a broader market share within the region. As UCONN is a state-wide destination for many levels of trips, i.e. conferences, sports, visits, etc., this offers a substantial upside potential.

We believe that a key element to help Downtown Mansfield create the vibrant atmosphere it seeks is to improve and augment the businesses that currently exist, helping them carve out a deeper market niche and appeal to a wider market segment of the population. Improving the retail already in place enhances the attraction of new retailers and employs the experience of merchants who are familiar with the peculiarities of this market.

C. Building Mix Plan

In order to achieve the vibrant street life envisioned for Downtown Mansfield the types and sizes of stores and supporting uses at ground level are vital. The table which follows suggests a ground floor building mix plan comprised of existing stores and uses and proposed stores and uses. The new Downtown would contain approximately 200,000 square feet of uses on the ground floor. A site plan illustrating these uses follows the table.

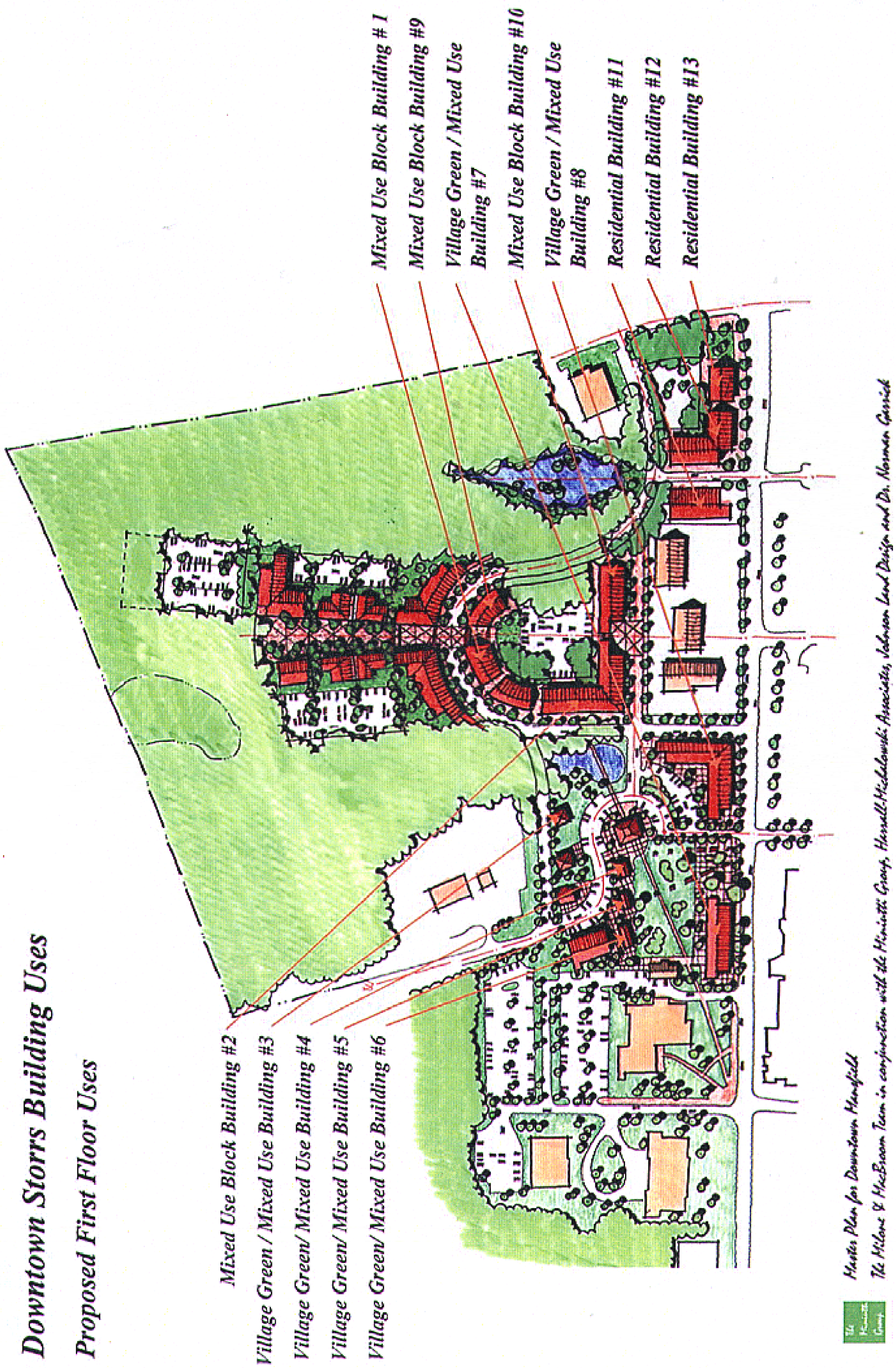
DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD - CORE AREA
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR BUILDING MIX PLAN

SIC Classification	Category	No. of Existing Establishments	Total Square Footage	Proposed New Sq Ft	% of Total
54	Food Stores				
5411	Convenience Store	1	3,400		3.0%
	Gourmet Shop		*1,500*	*1500*	
	Local Baked Goods		*1,000*	*1000*	
55	Automotive	1	1,400		0.7%
56	Apparel & Accesory	2	2,800		5.3%
	Womens Wear		*2000*	*2000*	
	Other Apparel		*3000*	*3000*	
	Shoes		*1000*	*1000*	
	Army & Navy Store		*1500*	*1500*	
57	Home Furnishings				2.9%
5735	Records, Tapes & CDs	2	3,125		
	Futons/Bedding		*2500*	*2500*	
58	Eating & Drinking Places				28.9%
5812	Eating Places	10	22,120		
5813	Bars	1	8,230		
	Ice Cream Shop		*1,200*	*1,200*	
	Night Club	1	*10,000*	*10,000*	
	Ethnic/Theme Restaurants	5	*15,000*	*15,000*	
59	Misc Retail				16.9%
5912	Pharmacies	1	3,500		
5932	Books	1	900		
5947	Gifts/Novelty	1	1,050		
5992	Florist	1	1,050		
5999	Misc. Retail	5	5,744		
	Consignment Shop		*2,500*	*2,500*	
	Antiques		*2,500*	*2,500*	
	Bicycle Shop		*1,200*	*1,200*	
	Sporting Goods		*3,000*	*3,000*	
	Artist Display Gallery	*15 @ 500 sf*	*7,500*	*7,500*	
	Tourist Info Office		*1,200*	*1,200*	
	Crafts & Home Made Products		*2,000*	*2,000*	
	Carts, Kiosks, Wall shops		*1,000*	*1,000*	
60	Financial Institutions	2	3,700		1.9%
72	Personal Services	5	3,514		1.8%

80 Health Services	2	4,900		2.5%
Office	4	4,900		2.5%
43 Post Office	1	8,000		4.1%
82 Educational Services		*4,000*	*4000*	2.0%
86 Church	1	11,686		6.0%
89 Service	4	6,500		3.3%
Additional Service & Office		*3,600*	*3,600*	1.8%
Residential - Bldgs. 1, 9, 12, 13		*32,000*	*32,000*	16.3%
TOTAL PROPOSED NEW BUILDING AREA AT GRADE			***99,200***	
TOTAL DOWNTOWN CORE GROUND FLOOR AREA		**195,719**		100%
		Relocation of Existing Businesses	*22,800*	
New Building Space At Grade			***122,000*** **sq. ft.**	
Percent New Space At Grade			**62%**	

italics = proposed

The proposed building program in the core area consists of 361,000 square feet of new building space in two and three story buildings. The site plan on the next page distributes this space among thirteen buildings within the core area. The table that follows presents the proposed building size and uses to be contained within each building. While building sizes and shapes are likely to change during project implementation, maintaining the relative distribution of uses and densities should be pursued as an objective of the program. The core of Downtown Mansfield, including existing buildings to remain, will contain 435,000 square feet of building space.


Downtown Storrs Building Uses
Proposed First Floor Uses
Mixed Use Block Building #2
Village Green / Mixed Use Building #3
Village Green/ Mixed Use Building #4
Village Green/ Mixed Use Building #5
Village Green/ Mixed Use Building #6
Mixed Use Block Building # 1
Mixed Use Block Building #9
Village Green / Mixed Use Building #7
Mixed Use Block Building #10
Village Green / Mixed Use Building #8
Residential Building #11
Residential Building #12
Residential Building #13
Master Plan for Downtown Mansfield
The Milone & MacBroom Team in conjunction with the Maniatti Group, Herrell Michalowski Associates, Johnson Land Design and Dr. Norman Garrick

DOWNTOWN MANSFIELD - CORE AREA
PROPOSED BUILDING SIZE & USE SCHEDULE

Building Number	Footprint	Ground Floor	No.	Upper Floor	Total
Reference	Sq. Ft.	Use	of Floors	Use	Square Footage
(see attached plan)					
1	6,000	residential	3	residential – market rate - 18 du's	18,000
2	25,000	retail	3	residential – faculty - 28 du's	75,000
3	2,000	Craft Shops	2	office	4,000
4	1,000	Tourist Information Office	2	office	2,000
5	1,000	Dairy Bar	2	office	2,000
6	1,000	Baked Goods	2	office	2,000
7	12,000	art related retail	3	residential lofts – 20 du's	36,000
8	25,000	retail/restaurant	3	office/residential – market rate - 16 du's	75,000
9	6,000	residential	3	residential – market rate - 18 du's	18,000
10	12,000	retail	3	residential – market rate - 16 du's	36,000
11	11,000	service/educational	3	service/educational	33,000
12	15,000	life style residential	3	life style residential – 22 du's	45,000
13	5,000	life style residential	3	life style residential – 8 du's	15,000
Total	**122,000**				**361,000**

SUMMARY - NEW CONSTRUCTION

Ground Floor Uses:	Upper Floor Uses:	Total:	
retail – 78,000 sq. ft.	retail – 0 sq. ft.	retail - 78,000 sq. ft.*	* 23,000 s.f. of replacement space included
residential – 32,000 sq. ft.	residential – 187,000 sq. ft	residential - 219,000 sq. ft.	146 dwelling units
service/ed. – 11,000 sq. ft.	service/ed. – 22,000 sq. ft.	service/educational - 33,000 sq. ft.	
office –1,000 sq. ft.	office – 30,000 sq. ft.	office - 31,000 sq. ft.	
122,000 sq. ft.	**239,000 sq. ft.** .	**361,000 sq. ft.**	**total new construction**
		74,000 sq. ft.	existing buildings
		435,000 sq. ft.	**Downtown Mansfield Core**

V. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

To implement the market strategy and create a new Downtown business district, the following recommendations are made in three inter-dependent categories:

- Public/Private partnership;
- Marketing;
- Regulatory Climate;

1. Public/Private Partnerships

The process of creating a new Downtown will require a sustained financial and political commitment from Downtown's primary stakeholders, including property owners, businesses, residents, the University of Connecticut and the Town of Mansfield. A new vehicle is required to oversee development Downtown as the University and Town residents have become increasingly polarized in recent years. There needs to be created an effective public/private partnership organization to develop, market and manage the Downtown business district.

Create a Development Corporation: Put in place a development corporation, a 501(C)(3) non-profit corporation, to act as the development agent to create new space on University land.

A development corporation will require:

- A specific mission statement;
- Representative and relevant leadership;
- Professional development staff;
- Financial resources.

It is recommended that the Development Corporation become the implementation arm of the Mansfield Partnership charged with advancing the Downtown business district. Suggested roles for the development corporation include:

- Charge the Development Corporation with implementing specific portions of the Master Plan. The Development Corporation should be the primary entity to carry out site development, marketing and business recruitment initiatives for new space.

- The Development Corporation should be directly accountable to The Mansfield Downtown Partnership. The Development Corporation board should include Downtown business and property owners and representation from neighborhood residents, the University, the Town and students. A board of 11 to 15 persons is recommended.

- Professional contract staff should be secured to carry out the development program.

Approaches To Financing and Funding

Central to the undertaking of this program is the assemblage of several financing and funding sources to pay for the improvements proposed. In this age of limited government budgets, this task can be a formidable one. However, by combining several program resources together with private funding, a viable program funding plan can be developed. Fortunately, the availability and cost of private financing is currently at the most attractive levels in many years. Since private funding of property development will likely be the dominant source of financing, early initiation of this program is advisable in order to take advantage of the favorable interest rate environment. The developer solicitation process linked to guaranteed housing occupancy is the likely vehicle to be employed to begin the creation of new building stock. The proposed Development Corporation should be tasked to administer this process.

Some improvements, notable infrastructure, should probably involve a mixture of public fundings. This approach has been typical of most revitalization plans throughout the United States. Possible funding sources include:

- Urban Act Funding by the Connecticut Legislature
- Municipal Development Program administered by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development
- Town Bonds
- University Capital Budget
- Economic Development Administration Infrastructure Grants
- Tax Increment Financing

Other assistance that will be helpful in achieving the Master Plan that will require funding are:

A working capital pool for small retailers and businesses Downtown is important to generate store upgrading and larger inventories of merchandise. A broader selection of specialty goods is necessary to enhance the specialty retail niche of Downtown merchants. The local banking community should be the source of funds with some public credit enhancement to secure the loan pool and credit availability.

Tax assessment deferrals for substantial renovation of private property should be considered by the Town of Mansfield. Provisions of Section 12-65c-f of the General Statutes permit gradual phasing-in over ten years the value of the rehabilitation. This removes the disincentive of higher property taxes for upgrading buildings. Rehabilitation should follow architectural design guidelines in order to be eligible for deferrals.

Provisions of architectural assistance for exterior renovation is a necessary service. Providing property owners and merchants with preliminary design assistance to help visualize the type of improvements that could be made to their properties stimulates rehabilitation activity. This also assists in achieving a high level of design quality and consistency of approach.

Consider creation of a special services district upon rent-up of first phase of Downtown development. Special services districts have successfully served as the focal point for business district revitalization programs in many Connecticut cities. The control of the district is held by property owners and businesses in the Downtown. In this manner, those most directly affected supply the impetus to carry out programs of events, promotions and maintenance of the Downtown.

In its simplest form, a special services district is a legal mechanism wherein property owners within a defined geographical boundary can request the municipality to levy a special tax assessment upon all taxable property within the defined area for purposes of generating revenue for certain predetermined purposes. This concept allows a government entity to provide certain specialized services or improvements in only one part of a jurisdiction and to tax only the benefiting property owners for the services or improvements. Since a referendum of the affected property owners is mandated by the statute, the property owners in effect impose an additional tax upon themselves in order to gain services or improvements which they feel are important to the viability of their district. A district cannot be formed without a majority of the property owners within the district voting for its formation <u>and</u> the combined assessed value within the district.

An important feature of the special services district, as operated in Connecticut, is that it is directly governed by the property owners within the district. This feature provides owners and businesses a direct role in shaping development in their area by creating and assigning funding to projects and programs they feel are beneficial to their district. This feature reduces some of the pressure to compete for funds within the municipal budgeting process and eliminates problems with unreliable voluntary contributions. A program and budget is assembled annually to address those district issues felt to be most important and a tax levy is recommended to the district to provide certain municipal services and make an annual grant to the district for providing such services.

The special services district does appear to offer benefits which would tend to reinforce efforts to stimulate revitalization of the Downtown. It could function as the vehicle to carry out some of the programs and events on an on-going basis. Most importantly, it could be the self help vehicle through which the Downtown community could be more actively involved in the day-to-day activities that lead to making Downtown a vital and exciting area. The self governing feature of the special assessment district has proven attractive to Downtown interests in other Connecticut communities.

2. Marketing

A series of grassroots marketing initiatives are recommended to deliver information about Downtown businesses and activities directly to the primary market.

10% Marketing Fund: To finance necessary marketing tactics, a "10% marketing fund" supported by Downtown businesses is suggested. All Downtown businesses would be asked to contribute 10% of their annual individual marketing budgets into a Downtown business district marketing fund. To encourage and leverage contributions for the fund, it is recommended that the Town of Mansfield offer matching funds for the first $25,000 raised by Downtown merchants. An annual marketing fund of $50,000 to $75,000 is projected, although marketing efforts could commence with a lesser amount. The marketing fund would finance part time staff and/or a marketing agency to undertake the following activities:

Downtown Business District Web Site: The web site would provide a central focus for Downtown activities, including:

- Business directory including restaurant menus;
- Special retail promotions;
- Calendar of events (updated weekly);
- Community activities (updated weekly);
- Illustrations of current and planned Downtown improvements;
- Economic profile and investment information;
- Links to a variety of affiliated local organizations, including the University of Connecticut, Town of Mansfield, the "Quiet Corner" web sites.

Town and University Marketing: Several marketing channels exist to disseminate information on Downtown businesses and activities in a cost effective manner. Options include:

<u>Town</u>

- Weekly electronic newsletter update, distributed through the Town's and/or University web sites;
- Quarterly neighborhood forums sponsored by the Mansfield Downtown Partnership inviting residents to react to and suggest new business and district improvements for the Downtown.

<u>Students/University</u>

- Distribute flyers and/or newspapers through the UCONN dining halls and other on-campus locations to provide current information on Downtown businesses and activities;
- Invest in collaborative promotions and events tied to specific University activities (i.e. beginning of classes, Parent's Week, Homecoming, etc.). Promotions and events should be marketed through direct channels to students, including advertising in the university newspaper;
- Offer discounts and frequency promotions to University workers (i.e. 10% off with University employment identification);
- Lunchtime promotions by restaurants targeted to University and other Downtown workers;
- Annual survey and/or focus groups of students to track changes and trends in student consumption needs and patterns.

Special Events: Special events can be an effective tool for focusing Downtown markets, particularly events that position the Downtown community gathering place and appeal to both resident and student markets.

Farmer's Market: The Farmer's Market was identified as an activity of interest by both residents and students in past community surveys. The Farmer's Market is currently located in the parking lot of the Congregational Church off North Eagleville Road. The Market could differentiate itself by offering an arts and crafts component, or themes consistent with major University or Town events. The Market should be staged on the new Town Green or Square.

Other special event opportunities should be investigated and evaluated on the ability to build a stronger sense of community and attract both Town and University markets.

Upgrade the presentation of merchandise and stock: Conduct periodic peer review of the layout and display practices of each store. Utilize the advisory capabilities of state and national retail associations to bring the latest concepts of that area of retailing to the Downtown merchant.

Promotional Activities: Promotional activities by the Downtown merchant community should be intensified with more cooperative advertising and greater coordination.

Turnover: Since a University community experiences turnover in residents each year, Downtown should make special efforts to welcome new residents to Mansfield. Special welcome mailings, gift packages and invitations to shop Downtown can build recognition and the shopper base.

Restaurants should be encouraged to use outdoor areas where possible. The sidewalk and plaza area in front of the restaurants can serve this purpose. Adding a few tables with colorful umbrellas can add greatly to the visual quality of the street. Besides enhancing the vitality of the street scene, outdoor areas increase restaurant capacity with minimal increase in fixed costs. With the addition of heating elements, these tables can be used into the colder months of the year.

3. Regulatory Control

Current zoning regulations make no provision for high-density, mixed-use development with shared parking. It is recommended that the Town of Mansfield create a Downtown mixed-use zone which permits and encourages the new pattern of development in Downtown. The new zone district is essential if private property owners are to fully participate in creating the new Downtown.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Household Trends and Marketview Comparison Report
Downtown Market Area

APPENDIX B

UCONN Visitation Estimates

APPENDIX C

Downtown Mansfield Business Survey Form